

# Augusta Regional Transportation Study Newsletter

Issue 26

April 2006

## **Whiskey/ Powderhouse Connector Road Study**

After several months of work, the Whiskey/ Powderhouse Connector Road Ad Hoc Committee and Day Wilburn Associates have completed the draft report reviewing possible routes between Whiskey Road and Powderhouse Road on the south side of the city of Aiken. The report looks at seven alternatives and a no-build scenario based on several factors such as connectivity, property impact, cost, and safety. The draft report will be available for the public to review at a public meeting on April 27, 2006 at the City Conference Center in Aiken.

## **2006 Congestion Management Study**

Some changes are being made for the 2006 ARTS Congestion Management Study. In the South Carolina portion of the study area, a couple of new segments and additional control points were added to existing routes. Thanks to the city of Aiken Planning department staff for their help in making these changes! In addition, all CMS routes will be evaluated to make sure that control points coincide with speed limits on all routes. Finally, staff will be reviewing current traffic conditions for the entire study area to determine if and where new CMS routes need to be established. For more information about the 2006 CMS, contact either Calvin Abram or Stephen Strohmingner

## **SCDOT Advanced Planning Project Report**

The SCDOT Planning office made a presentation to the South Carolina Policy Subcommittee at their last meeting on a new initiative the office is undertaking with all projects. The presentation was of the Advance Project Planning Report (APPR) prepared for the Hitchcock Parkway widening project that is currently in the ARTS TIP and LRTP. An APPR is prepared in advance of preliminary engineering and helps to identify, well in advance, any problems that may occur during the preliminary engineering phase of a project. The APPR also includes the typical section(s) that will be used when the project goes to construction.

The Hitchcock Parkway APPR was done cooperatively by individuals from the Planning, Environmental, and Preconstruction offices of the SCDOT, and members of the Aiken County Planning staff. Draft copies (electronic or paper) are available by contacting Stephen Strohmingner in the Aiken County Planning office or Brian Fulmer at the SCDOT Office of Planning. Also, the APPR for the Atomic Road widening project is currently underway and the draft should be completed by late spring.

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## **ARTS MEETINGS**

ARTS committee meetings are usually held on the 8<sup>th</sup> Floor of the Municipal Building at 530 Greene Street, Augusta, GA. Please call the ARCPC (706) 821-1796 to verify time and place.

## **VISIT OUR WEBSITE**

The Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission website includes all ARTS committee agendas and related transportation planning information. The address is:

[http://www.augustaga.gov/departments/planning\\_zoning/](http://www.augustaga.gov/departments/planning_zoning/)

### **Georgia Transportation Enhancement Awards Announced**

The Georgia Transportation Board Members have made their selections for the Transportation Enhancement (TE) projects for the FY '06 and FY '07 funding. GDOT received 270 applications statewide requesting over \$220 million in TE Funds. There was only \$54.6 million available statewide for TE projects; each Board Member was allocated \$4.2 million for their congressional district. The Transportation Board selected the projects based on technical reviews of the applications and the recommendations of the TE Advisory Panel. The following projects in and near the ARTS area were awarded TE Funds:

#### **Congressional District 9**

Columbia County – Harlem Streetscape Phase 1 and 2; federal share awarded \$700,000.00

#### **Congressional District 12**

Richmond County – Multiuse Trail Phase IV, 3rd level of Augusta Canal; federal share awarded \$550,000.00

Richmond County – Reynolds Street Depot Community Center; federal share awarded \$450,000.00

**Source: GDOT Website**

### **Intersection Improvement Project Planned**

#### ***Upgrade Planned on Washington Rd. @ Halali Farm Road***

Improvements are planned at the intersection of Washington Road (SR 104) and Halali Farm Road (CR 92) in the Evans area of Columbia County. Preliminary plans are approximately 85% complete for the project, which is estimated to cost \$600,000. Major components of the project include widening existing travel lanes, the addition of turn lanes and the installation of a traffic signal. The improvements are designed to reduce the number of crashes, improve safety and facilitate the smooth flow of traffic through the intersection. Derrick Cameron, Traffic Design Manager with the firm PBS&J, is waiting on environmental clearance in order to proceed with requesting a preliminary field plans review. The project is scheduled for the July 2007 letting.

The problems drivers encounter at this "T" intersection are typical of those at many intersections in the ARTS area. Southbound traffic on Halali Farm Road is experiencing excessive delays, especially during peak travel times, because of the volume and speed of the traffic on Washington Road, the lack of turn lanes and other design problems with the intersection. A 2003 report prepared by the Columbia County Traffic Engineering Department summarized the need for improvements at the intersection, including the need for a traffic signal, and documented 20 vehicular crashes at the intersection in a 24 month period between June 2001 and May 2003. Fourteen of the accidents involved vehicles turning left from Halali Farm Road onto Washington Road. The problems drivers encounter at this intersection also were the focus of discussion during a recent meeting of the ARTS Citizens Advisory Committee.

### **Frequently Called Numbers**

- GDOT Area Office – Augusta (706) 855-3466
- GDOT District Two Office – Tennille (478) 552-4601
- SC DOT - Aiken County Maintenance Shop (803) 642-7600
- Augusta Public Works and Engineering Dept. (706) 796-5040
- Augusta Traffic Engineering Division (706) 821-1841
- Columbia County Road Construction Dept. (706) 541-4011
- Columbia County Roads and Bridges Dept. (706) 541-1143
- Augusta Public Transit (706) 821-1721
- Aiken County Transit (Best Friend Express) (803) 648-6493



### **2007 ARTS UPWP Approved**

The 2007 ARTS Unified Planning Work Program was approved by the Policy Committee on March 2, 2006. The UPWP documents the planning priorities for the ARTS study area and describes all planning activities to be completed with transportation and transit planning funds between July 1, 2006 and June 30, 2007.

### **Third Level Canal Plan Nearing Completion**

A redevelopment plan for the third level of the historic Augusta Canal is nearing completion. The draft plan includes proposals for a linear park and trail along the canal, adaptive reuse of historic buildings, Heritage Square Park, the James Brown Experience Museum, new and rehabilitated housing and neighborhood retail. The plan is being developed under the guidance of a task force appointed by then-Mayor Bob Young. Public involvement included a design charrette and public meetings held at Dyess Park during the week of February 27<sup>th</sup>–March 3<sup>rd</sup>. The improvements are designed to complement a recent \$50 million environmental cleanup of the canal, and the planned construction of a new judicial center near the canal. For more information contact the Augusta Canal Authority at (706) 823-0440

### **Seasonal Open Burning Ban Begins May 1st**

On May 1, 2006, a seasonal open burning ban takes effect in Richmond and Columbia Counties. The ban is in effect through September 30, 2006. This annual ban is part of an early action compact designed to prevent the Augusta area from becoming an ozone non-attainment area. The ban is designed to limit open burning during the hottest, sunniest time of the year when weather conditions can intensify air quality problems.

The only exceptions to the ban include the following activities:

- Agricultural processes necessary for the production of crops
- Prescribed burning of forestland by the owner or designee to establish favorable seedbeds, remove competing underbrush, accelerate nutrient cycling, control tree pests, and contribute to ecological benefits. These burns cannot be used to clear property designated for construction activities.
- Slash burning of forestlands by the owner or designee following tree harvesting. Slash burning must be followed by re-seeding of the area.
- Small fires for recreational purposes or cooking food
- Fires set for fire-fighting training
- Operation of open flame devices, including tar kettles, blow torches, welding torches, portable heaters, and other flame-making equipment
- Disposal of packing material previously containing explosives

For more information, or to report a violation, contact the Georgia Environmental Protection Division district office in Augusta at 792-7744

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APRIL 2006
NO MEETINGS
MAY 2006
CAC/TCC – MAY 10 <sup>TH</sup> 10:00 A.M. POLICY COMMITTEE NO MEETING
JUNE 2006
POLICY – JUNE 1ST, 11:00 A.M. CAC/TCC NO MEETING

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